SC approves late-hearing mechanism

Criminal cases involving elderly convicts to be prioritised

By Nasir Iqbal

ISLAMABAD: In order to make the Supreme Court efficient and facilitate litigants and lawyers, the apex court has approved a late-hearing mechanism and the issuance of a monthly cause-list, among other measures, to enable transparency and improve service delivery.

The directives were issued pursuant to a meeting between Chief Justice of Pakistan Yahya Afridi and the advocates of the Supreme Court (ASCs), advocates-on-record (AORs), and office bearers of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA).

According to a handout issued on Tuesday, the Supreme Court decided that the proposed monthly cause-list will be issued in advance and the weekly cause-list will be issued by Wednesday, subject to any subsequent changes arising from roster sittings or the non-availability of benches. A late-hearing mechanism has also been approved, whereby, upon a joint application by advocates for both sides, cases may be fixed for hearing after the lunch break with the approval of the CJP before the notified bench. No adjournment on any ground will be entertained in such cases, the handout said.

Regarding delisting of cases, intimation will ordinarily be conveyed at least two days prior to the fixed date, and advocates will ensure timely communication to the parties. Where delisting occurs within 24 hours, the cases will—except on Fridays—be redistributed or re-fixed before other available benches. If this is not feasible, such cases will be fixed in the following week in accordance with the approved policy.

The policy on early hearing will be strictly adhered to. Criminal cases in which a substantial portion of the sentence has been served, cases involving convicts aged eighty years and above, and cases settled through compromise will be included in the early-hearing category for priority fixation. Likewise, judgements and orders, once signed by the bench, will be promptly uploaded and transmitted to the advocates via email, and strict compliance will be ensured by the officers.

Benches at branch registries will continue to be nominated keeping in view the pendency of cases at each registry. For redressal of grievances and facilitation on procedural matters, advocates and litigants may approach the Public Facilitation Centre, where the registrar of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, along with deputed officers, will remain available daily from 11am to 11:15am.All officers have been directed to ensure effective implementation of these decisions in both letter and spirit to promote efficiency, transparency, and improved service delivery.

120 shops gutted as fire engulfs Quetta shopping plaza

By Saleem Shahid

QUETTA: A major fire swept through a shopping plaza in the busy Price Road area of the provincial capital on Tuesday, destroying at least 120 shops and leaving three people, including two firefighters, unconscious during efforts to bring the flames under control.

Officials said the fire broke out in the early hours in Haleem Plaza and gutted shops selling mobile phones, electronic goods, shoes and garments. Police, rescue workers and fire brigade personnel reached the site and rescued 15 people, including 14 hairdressers and the plaza's watchmen, who were trapped inside the burning building.

Rescue officials said the fire erupted at around 4:30am and was reported by area residents. Fire tenders reached the site within about 15 minutes and began firefighting operations as the flames rapidly spread through the plaza. The district administration declared an emergency in hospitals as a precautionary measure, officials added.

Shop owners arrived at the scene as news of the fire spread and watched their premises burn. "We have lost goods worth billions of rupees and nothing is left in our shops," shopkeeper Abdullah Khan told the media.

The chief fire officer later said the blaze had been brought under control and cooling operations were underway to prevent flare-ups. He said six fire tenders from the fire brigade and four vehicles from the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) participated in the operation, with fireballs also used to help contain the flames.

He said a short circuit caused the fire, which spread rapidly after nearby transformers and power cables caught fire, making it difficult for firefighters to control the blaze.

Meanwhile, Metropolitan Corporation Quetta (MCQ) Administrator Mujeeb Qambrani visited the affected area in Liaquat Bazaar to review the emergency operation. He praised the fire brigade and the metropolitan corporation for what he termed a timely response.

Fire service officials told him that 13 fire brigade vehicles and dozens of firefighters from the metropolitan corporation took part in the operation, with tenders dispatched from different parts of the city to prevent the fire from spreading further.

Mr Qambrani commended the fire service, rescue teams and other departments for their swift action, saying the protection of lives and property was the corporation's top priority.

He directed all relevant agencies to remain on alert until the cooling process was completed and ordered a thorough safety inspection of the affected building.

Balochistan to launch train service between Quetta and Kuchlak

CM says Rs1.4bn will be released for the project 'within days'

QUETTA: The Balochistan government on Tuesday announced launching of People's Train Service between Quetta and Kuchlak and said it will release Rs1.4 billion for the purpose in the next few days.

The announcement was made by Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti during a meeting with Federal Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi in the Chief Minister Secretariat.

The two leaders discussed restoration of the railways projects in Balochistan through joint venture of the Balochistan government and Pakistan Railways.

"An agreement in principle was reached between Pakistan Railways and the Balochistan government on launching of joint development projects including Peoples' Train Service," officials said.

Speaking on the occasion, the federal minister said appreciated the development and said this is for the first time in the 78-year history of Pakistan Railways that a decision has been made at the provincial level for devolution which is a strong example of trust and cooperation between the federation and provinces.

He said the three provinces had shown interest in the local railway services projects, but Balochistan has taken the lead in this connection.

Describing the People's Train Service as a beautiful combination of mutual cooperation between Pakistan Railways and the Balochistan government, Mr Abbasi said the project would prove to be a milestone in providing affordable, safe and quality travel facilities for the people.

Chief Minister Bugti said the Balochistan government would provide funds for construction of new railway stations and upgradation of the existing infrastructure.

He said that after the success of the Sariab to Kuchlak People's Train Service, the scope of this service would be expanded from Mastung to Pishin and other areas of the province.—Saleem Shahid

Kabul 'inaction' prompted border closure, says PM

Continued from Page 1

serious commitment," he added.

Terrorism resurgence in KP

In his address, the premier also spoke at length about Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the surge in terrorism.

Calling the province a "beautiful region" of Pakistan, he praised its people, saying they "never hesitate to sacrifice their lives for their country".

"Whatever happened as a result of the Afghan war is before you," the premier said, noting that Pakistan welcomed refugees from across the border and allowed them to live here "like a family".

"[But] what did Pakistan get in return?" asked the prime minister. "By 2018, terrorism had been completely eradicated, and everyone knew this was achieved through great sacrifices," PM Shehbaz said.

He pointed out that in the wake of the 2014 Army Public School attack, the armed forces and the government decided that there would be "no good or bad Taliban".

"Today, there is no such distinction. But after 2018, what was the reason that this menace resurged?" he asked, adding that "we all know the answer very well".

"Numerous terrorists were released from Swat, and thousands of people were brought from Afghanistan to live in Pakistan. This was the main reason terrorism resurged in the country," PM Shehbaz said.

"Without going into any political argument, I want to say that if you compare KP's journey of prosperity and development over the past 10 years with that of Sindh, Punjab or Balochistan, the truth will become clear," he remarked.

Davos sojurn

Later on Tuesday, PM Shehbaz landed in Davos to attend the annual World Economic Forum meeting, in an effort "to advance Pakistan's engagement… with global trade and investment partners".

"Pakistan's ongoing economic reform journey is unlocking profound opportunities, driven by a resilient and entrepreneurial workforce and significant potential across energy, agriculture, minerals, and emerging technologies," PM Shehbaz wrote on X.

He added that Pakistan was "ready to harness this potential into mutually beneficial economic cooperation and long-term investment".

A separate post from the Foreign Office (FO) said that Dar, in addition to participating in WEF sessions, would also hold "sideline bilateral meetings with counterparts to advance Pakistan's diplomatic and economic priorities".

Meanwhile, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, who was already in Davos, met Mohamed Bin Hadi Al Hussaini, Minister of State for Financial Affairs of the United Arab Emirates.

The meeting provided an opportunity for both sides to review ongoing economic engagement and discuss ways to further strengthen the close and multifaceted relationship between Pakistan and the UAE, said a press release issued by the Ministry of Finance.

Al Hussaini appreciated the strong level of relations between the leadership of both countries and highlighted the importance of close people-to-people ties, which continue to underpin the longstanding partnership between Pakistan and the UAE.

Mr Aurangzeb acknowledged the UAE's experience in emerging financial technologies and shared Pakistan's recent steps toward strengthening its regulatory framework, including the establishment of a dedicated authority focusing on tokenization. He highlighted growing collaboration with Emirati financial institutions and noted encouraging trends in business-to-business engagement and offshoring activities.

Al Hussaini remarked on the marked improvement in Pakistans economic conditions compared to the period when the current reform program began, and stressed that continuity of policies remained the most critical factor for sustained progress.

FINANCE Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb meets UAE's Minister of State for Financial Affairs Mohamed Bin Hadi Al Hussaini. —X/Financegovpk

PHC seeks govt response to CPNE plea for dues

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court has issued notice to provincial finance secretary seeking his response to a contempt plea filed by Council of Newspapers Editors (CPNE), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, against non-clearance of outstanding dues by the government on account of advertisements despite giving assurance to the court in 2024.

A single-member bench of Justice Ijaz Anwar observed that as the matter pertained to a substantial amount of money to be paid to the petitioner, therefore, notice was issued to the respondent (finance secretary) for a date to be fixed later.

The contempt plea was filed by the CPNE through its KP Chairman Tahir Farooq.

The petitioner, represented by Advocate Shahid Naseem Chamkani and Mohammad Ihsan Mehsud, stated that it had filed a petition in 2023 wherein the high court was requested to declare illegal the non-payment of the outstanding advertisement bills of around Rs1.8 billion for past several decades by the government.

A two-member bench of Justice Sahibzada Asadullah and Justice Wiqar Ahmad had disposed of that petition on May 22, 2024, when the then secretary information Syed Abdul Jabbar Khan and additional secretary Abdul Haleem Khan had informed it that reconciliation was in process and they were going to calculate the outstanding amount.

When the instant contempt petition was filed, a deputy director (litigation) of the information department on Nov 10, 2025, sought time for resolving the issue.

The petitioner counsel stated that the issue continued to linger on despite giving assurance to the court time and again.

The petitioner said the government had been delaying the release of requisite amount to the information department for onward payment to members of the petition organisation.

Airspace ban on Indian planes extended

By Mohammad Asghar

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan's airspace will remain closed to Indian-registered aircraft till Feb 24, 2026, Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA) announced on Tuesday.

The extension in the ban has been notified three days before the extended ban was set to expire.

According to the latest Notam (notice to airmen) issued by the PAA, the ban on Indian flights has been extended until Feb 24 at 5am.

The ban on Indian registered aircraft was imposed due to ongoing tension between the two countries. India and Pakistan have closed their airspace to each other's airlines since tensions between them escalated in late April last year in the wake of a shooting in India-held Kashmir that killed 26 people. Initially Pakistan had closed its airspace on April 24, 2025 and later the ban was extended multiple times.

A Pakistan Airports Authority spokesman said the extended ban would apply to aircraft owned, operated or leased by Indian airlines, including military flights.

The airspace closure applies from ground level up to unlimited altitude.

Raja Nasir finally declared Senate opposition leader

Continued from Page 1

adopted was in line with established parliamentary practice and constitutional discipline to ensure that no step conflicted with or rendered infructuous the proceedings before the court. "The earlier deferment was therefore procedural, occasioned by institutional prudence, due deference to judicial authority and the rule of law," he remarked.

Speaking on the house floor, Barrister Ali Zafar said that with this appointment, the Senate now stood complete. He observed that the Senate functioned through the offices of the Chairman, the Leader of the House, the Leader of the Opposition and the members, and that one essential constitutional pillar had been missing which had now been duly put in place.

Release of political prisoners

In his address, the opposition leader acknowledged that he became a senator because of the PTI founder and declared himself a loyal companion of Mr Khan. He said he would never compromise on principles or violate the oath he had taken as a senator.

He also called on the Senate to speak up for the release of "political prisoners".

"We want these innocent people to be released from jail so that political instability in Pakistan ends," he said, adding that under the Constitution, only those had the right to rule who were voted into power by the people, not those rejected by them.

"The country cannot progress if you keep a popular leader in jail," he asserted, adding: "Today, Imran Khan is a popular leader. The presence of a popular leader is necessary for nation-building," he said.

He said governing the country was the job of politicians, recalling that some from the establishment had claimed they had nothing to do with politics.

Addressing treasury members, particularly PML-N's Rana Sanaullah, he urged them to steer the country towards a better political situation. "May no one have to face the injustice that Imran Khan is facing. The case against you was unjust and you know who was behind those cases. When will we stop them?" he asked.

He said Pakistan was facing multiple challenges, including lawlessness, and that people no longer trusted a system devoid of justice. "Look at what has become of the judiciary. People are losing confidence in parliament and they no longer trust the executive. The people of Pakistan do not trust this system," he said.

Referring to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Mr Abbas said the consequences of injustice were evident there. Alluding to the displacement of residents from Tirah during military operations, he asked how peace could be restored without the support of local people.

He called for collective wisdom in parliament, progress on cases against Imran Khan, and urged Pakistan to take a stand against US President Donald Trump over threats to Iran. He proposed convening sessions of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and neighbouring countries to oppose aggression in the region.

'Balanced and positive'

Speaking after Mr Abbas, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah praised the opposition leader's choice of words, calling his views "balanced and positive".

Responding to remarks on the Feb 8 elections, he recalled similar allegations after the 2018 polls and said neither side could retreat from its position. He invited the opposition to engage with the government on electoral reforms. He also cited the Charter of Democracy signed by Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto in 2006, and stressed the need for dialogue, saying political issues could only be resolved through talks and parliament.

SIUT BIUT
BENAZIR INSTITUTE OF UROLOGY AND TRANSPLANTATION
BIUT, a 300-bedded tertiary care hospital providing comprehensive care to patients with renal and related diseases.

Cancellation of TENDER No. 65 Supply of Ultrasound Machines at BIUT, Benazirabad

The biding process of above tender which was published on Saturday 17th January, 2026 is hereby cancelled due to unavoidable circumstances .

Office of the Director
Sindh Institute of Urology & Transplantation, Karachi.
Tel: (021) 99216977, 99215718/52, 111 000 313

NICVD
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASES

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To,
The Employees mentioned below

REF. # NICVD/HR/P/0070

FINAL ENQUIRY NOTICE

1- WHEREAS, you, the following employees of NICVD have been charged under NICVD Rule-63(iv) of the NICVD Service Regulations on account of the following acts of omission and commission constituting inefficiency and misconduct as mentioned in the rules and regulations of the said Service Regulations:

(i) That you have been keeping yourself absent from duty w.e.f. from the dates as mentioned against each below to date, without proper permission or approval from NICVD.

(ii) That you were directed to resume duty and explain the reasons of your absence from duty vide the official letters mentioned against each below but regrettably, you failed to resume your normal function/duties at your workstation in NICVD.

(iii) The above acts are tantamount to inefficiency and misconduct toward official duties.

S. #	Emp #	Full Name	CNIC #	Designation	Absent w.e.f.	Letter No. & Date	Home Address
01	5055	Santosh Kumar	45101-0911125-9	Staff Nurse	13-Jun-25	Letter No. 0001 (Dated 01-01-2026)	Muhallah Hafizabad Colony, Dharki Zillah Gothki Sindh.
02	1171	Muhammad Shoaib	31303-7227662-1	Nurse Aid	18-Oct-25	Letter No. 0002 (Dated 01-01-2026)	Bait Imam Bux Machi, Dakhana khas, Thal Hamza Tehsil Liaquatpur, Zillah, Rahim Yar Khan.

2- And WHEREAS, The management of NICVD decided to provide you with a final last opportunity to appear before the enquiry committee on January 29, 2026 (Thursday) at 11:00 a.m. in Administration Block HR Department and explain your conduct as to why one or more penalties including Major Penalty of "Dismissal/Removal from Service" as prescribed in Rule-88(i) of the NICVD Service Regulation may not be imposed upon you. Failing which it shall be presumed that you have no defense, and an ex-parte decision of your removal/dismissal from service shall be taken against you.

3- NICVD reserves the right to amend, discontinue or change any term(s) of this public notice at its sole discretion at any time through a subsequent public notice or otherwise. NICVD or its officers/ agents shall in no way be liable for any error(s) of omission or commission appearing in this public notice which has been issued in good faith and without prejudice to NICVD's right under the law whether civil, criminal or otherwise against the persons mentioned in this public notice.

Executive Director